



How should I undertake erosion work following floods?

Major flooding events often cause significant riverbank erosion that is highly visible. While some landowners may want to immediately fix this erosion, doing so without first seeking expert guidance or regulatory approval can result in harsh penalties and increased erosion risk.

Activities that modify a watercourse, such as erosion control works and channel realignment, construction of bed control measures, or watercourse crossings such as bridges, causeways and bed level crossings are considered 'controlled activities'. These require one or more licenses, permits or approvals. Regulatory approvals ensure proposed works are appropriate and are done in a way that prevents or minimises harm to the environment.

To minimise the risk of future erosion, it is important to identify the causes of the erosion and ensure they are addressed as part of the solution. Waterway processes, overland flow and runoff can be complex and require technical knowledge and expertise from a suitably qualified River Practitioner.

Without guidance from a River Practitioner, there is a risk that your time, effort and money could be wasted if the work is unsuitable for the specific situation and is destroyed or damaged in the next flood. You may also increase or shift the erosion and flooding problem elsewhere.

Other factors to consider before undertaking erosion work yourself include:

- even with good intentions, works in and around waterways have a risk of causing damage to the environment. Unauthorised works can threaten agricultural, economic, social, environmental and heritage values
- if you undertake unauthorised works you risk liability, legal costs and financial penalties, especially if the works fail and cause harm. You may also be required to cover the cost of any remediation if this is required
- you may not legally own the land where the work is required. For example, often the bed and banks of waterways is Crown Land and requires approval before any work can be undertaken
- work on unstable, eroded riverbanks can be a safety hazard for people and machinery. Qualified River Practitioners have the equipment and experience to safely undertake riverbank work
- there may be other hazards on site that you are unaware of, such as contaminated land, acid sulphate soils, asbestos and underground services. Material brought in as fill may also be contaminated.

High penalties can apply for carrying out activities without an approval or in an unauthorised manner.

If you have suffered erosion damage on your property, talk to Local Land Services staff about your situation, or contact your closest office on **1300 795 299**.



**Local Land
Services**